

^MILE ZOLA, NOVELIST AND REFORMER
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altogether; at other times he might transfer it to a subsequent chapter, where the fact, incident, problem, or theory enunciated would have a more logical place. Moreover,

while he was writing, it occasionally occurred to Mm that some incident he was describing, or some remark he attributed to one of his characters, would have a certain effect farther on; and thereupon he at once made a note of the circumstance, and, his chapter finished, transferred all such notes to their proper places. "It will be seen/³ says Alexis, from whom these particulars have been borrowed,¹ "that this method of proceeding from the general to the special is complicated, but logical and safe. A friend of Zola's (M. Eruneau?) told me that it reminded him of Wagner's learned and novel orchestration. I do not know how far that comparison may be accurate; but it is certain that Zola's works, when read for the first time by the profane, must have a little of the disconcerting effect of the Wagnerian operas. The first impression is one of great confusion ; the reader is on the point of exclaiming that there is no sign of composition, or rule; but on penetrating to the structure of the work you find that everything is mathematical ; you discover a deep science, and recognise that the outcome is really the result of prolonged labour fraught with strenuous patience and determination."

Edmondo de Amicis, in an appreciation of

Zola, included
in his " Recollections of Paris," mentions that
the novelist
showed him a number of notes he had prepared
for " L'As-
sommoir," and as Amicis's account of them
throws light on
Zola's methods of work, a quotation from his
pages may be
added to the particulars taken from Alexis.

* Alexis, *I. c.*, pp. 163-166.